

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 171625Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3288
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN'S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT

1. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
ON RHODESIA IN PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 16: BEGIN TEXT
"IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A CONSIDERED JUDGEMENT AS TO
THE ACCEPTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA AS A WHOLE
OF THE ARRANGEMENTS ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY IN SALISBURY.
IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO WILL LIVE IN A FUTURE ZIMBABWE WHO
SHOULD DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE. IT SEEMS THAT THERE
ARE CRUCIAL ISSUES YET TO BE RESOLVED INCLUDING THE
COMPOSITION OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS
POWERS; THE COMPOSITION OF THE SECURITY FORCES; AND
THE EXTENT TO WHICH OTHER NATIONALIST PARTIES WILL BE
INVOLVED IN THE TRANSITION AND IN FAIR AND FREE
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ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. WE SHALL
CONTINUE, AS WE HAVE DONE FROM THE START OF THE ANGLO-
UNITED STATES INITIATIVE, TO WORK WITH ALL PARTIES,
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, TO PROMOTE AN OVERALL
SETTLEMENT COMPATIBLE WITH THE PRINCIPLES ENDORSED BY
THE HOUSE AND TO WORK FOR THE CESSATION OF ALL VIOLENCE.

2. IN REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS, OWEN MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS:

-- "IT WOULD BE MOST UNWISE TO MAKE JUDGMENTS UNTIL WE HAVE FAR GREATER DETAIL. AS I HAVE SAID, THE ESSENTIAL JUDGMENT WILL BE MADE BY THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA THEMSELVES. THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE WHICH HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY THIS HOUSE... THE RIGHT HONORABLE GENTLEMAN ASKED ME TO SAY WHETHER

RULE. I

BELIEVE THAT IT IS, AND I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE WELCOMED."##

-- "I THINK WE WILL HAVE TO BEAR IN MIND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THIS HOUSE THAT SUCH A TEST OF OPINION IS SEEN TO BE FAIR AND OBJECTIVE. A REFERENDUM WOULD BE ONE WAY OF DOING IT, OR, ALTERNATIVELY, AN ELECTION BASED ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE."

-- "IT IS NO USE IGNORING THE FACT THAT OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE FORCES WHICH, IF NOT GIVEN A PROPER OPPORTUNITY, WILL CONTINUE THE ARMED STRUGGLE. IT IS OUR TASK TO TRY TO ENSURE THAT THESE PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY HAVE SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE IN THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT ARE MADE TO COME BACK AND PARTICIPATE IN FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS."

-- "IT WAS THIS GOVERNMENT WHO PROPOSED SPECIALLY ELECTED MEMBERS. THE PROPORTION OF SPECIALLY ELECTED MEMBERS THAT HAS BEEN PROPOSED IN SALISBURY IS MORE THAN UNCLASSIFIED

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WE HAVE PROPOSED IN OUR DELIBERATIONS. I HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT IF THERE IS SOME AGREEMENT AMONG ALL THE NATIONALIST PARTIES ON THE CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR THE FUTURE STABILITY OF ZIMBABWE, IT IS NOT FOR US IN THIS HOUSE TO HOLD BACK ON THIS. THE QUESTION IS HOW THEY ARE ELECTED. WE STILL NEED TO KNOW MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS, AND BISHOP MUZOREWA HAD STRONG VIEWS ON THIS MATTER AS RECENTLY AS SUNDAY."

-- "I THINK THAT THERE ARE POSITIVE THINGS WHICH CAN BE DONE. BUT THEY HAVE TO BE DONE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF TRYING TO GET THE GREATEST DEGREE OF INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE FOR THIS SOLUTION. IT IS ALL VERY WELL FOR PEOPLE TO ISOLATE THIS ISSUE AS JUST AN ISSUE BETWEEN THIS HOUSE AND RHODESIA. THERE IS THE WHOLE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS. THERE IS THE WHOLE QUESTION OF AFRICAN OPINION. IT IS WELL RECOGNISED BY BISHOP MUZOREWA AND THE REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE AND EVEN CHIEF CHIRAU THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO CARRY AS MUCH SUPPORT AMONG THE AFRICANS AS THEY POSSIBLY CAN. THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN WORKING IN THIS ENDEAVOUR AND HAS BEEN OF TREMENDOUS ASSISTANCE. THE AMERICANS CARRY GREAT

INFLUENCE IN AFRICA AT THE MOMENT - GREATER INFLUENCE
THAN THEY HAVE EVER CARRIED BEFORE. IF THEY PUT THEIR
INFLUENCE, AS THEY HAVE DONE, BEHIND A PEACEFUL SETTLE-

NOTE BY OC/T: ##SENTENCE AS RECEIVED.

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MENT, I BELIEVE IT CAN STILL BE ACHIEVED."
-- "I AM GRATEFUL FOR WHAT THE HONORABLE GENTLEMAN SAID
ABOUT MR. NKOMO. HE IS A NATIONALIST LEADER OF DISTINC-
TION WHO HAS MADE GREAT SACRIFICES FOR HIS COUNTRY.
HE HAS BEEN IN PRISON, AND HE IS NOT TO BE DESCRIBED
AS A TERRORIST AND GUERRILLA IN THAT SENSE. HE HAS
TAKEN UP ARMS FIGHTING FOR THE LIBERATION OF HIS COUNTRY.
EVERYONE HAS TO COME TO A TIME WHEN HE HAS TO DECIDE
WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF HIS COUNTRY. I HOPE
THAT AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, WHICH I SHALL CERTAINLY
TRY TO BRING ABOUT, HE WILL FEEL ABLE TO PARTICIPATE
IN FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS, AND THAT THOSE IN RHODESIA

AT THE MOMENT WILL SO ARRANGE THE DISCUSSIONS THAT IT
IS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DO SO WITH DIGNITY AND HONOUR."
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-- "THE FIRST TEST OF ACCEPTABILITY, AND THE MOST
IMPORTANT ONE, IS FOR THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA AS A WHOLE.
IT IS THEN FOR THIS GOVERNMENT AND FOR THIS HOUSE TO
DETERMINE WHETHER THAT ACCEPTABILITY IS VALID. THE
ONLY AUTHORITY TO LEGALISE THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN
RHODESIA IS THE HOUSE OF COMMONS."

-- I HAVE ALREADY STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES
ADMINISTRATION AT PRESENT ENJOYS BETTER UNDERSTANDING
AND RESPECT IN AFRICA AND HAS GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN
AFRICA THAN IT HAS HAD FOR MANY YEARS. ONE OF THE
PEOPLE WHO HAS MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS END
HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG. THE UNITED STATES ADMINIS-
TRATION HAS BEEN A FIRM SUPPORTER THROUGHOUT OF THE
ANGLO-UNITED STATES INITIATIVE AND I HAVE NO WISH TO SAY
ANYTHING TODAY THAT WILL ENDANGER THAT RELATIONSHIP IN
ANY WAY." END TEXT

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